



City of Rockville

M E M O R A N D U M

February 19, 2004

TO: City of Rockville Planning Commission

FROM: Deane Mellander, Planner III

VIA: Bob Spalding, AICP, Chief of Planning

SUBJECT: Proposed Zoning Text Amendment TXT2003-00206; To allow private educational institutions in the O-2 Zone by special exception.

BACKGROUND

The applicant represents the Christ Episcopal School. The school is pursuing the purchase of the property at 22 West Jefferson Street for the purpose of expanding the school. The property was placed in the O-2 Zone by comprehensive zoning in 2003. Currently, private educational institutions are not permitted in the zone. The text amendment was accepted by the Mayor and Council on February 9, 2004. The public hearing on this text amendment will be held on March 15, 2004.

ANALYSIS

The statement of the applicant, Attachment C, sets forth their rationale for the amendment. The text amendment would allow private educational institutions by special exception in the O-2 Zone. Such uses are currently allowed by special exception in all of the residential zones. It is a permitted use in the RPC and Town Center zones. As a special exception, the use is subject to the requirements for certain special exceptions contained in Section 25-356. These provisions provide for minimum lot size requirements depending on the number of students in the school. In addition, the use, if on a separate lot from a religious institution, must comply with the general conditions of approval for a special exception contained in Section 25-338.

The O-2 Zone was originally created as a means of providing a transition between commercial uses and one-family residential neighborhoods, including the conversion of one-family houses to office uses. The zone was modified by text amendment TXT2003-00196, which established development standards in the zone, and also created a new C-T, Commercial Transition, Zone. In general, TXT2003-00196 did not change the land uses permitted in the various zones. Prior to

the text amendment, the O-2 Zone did not permit private educational institutions, and this was carried through the text amendment unchanged.

Given that these uses are already allowed by special exception in all the one-family residential zones and the Town Center zones, it seems logical to allow this use in a low-density commercial office zone that serves as a transition between these zones. The same special exception standards would apply to the use as in a residential zone. In the case of the applicant for the text amendment, it would allow the expansion of an existing school that has been an asset to the community.

RECOMMENDATION

The staff finds that the proposed text amendment will allow for a use that complies with the intent of the O-2, is currently allowed in the one-family residential zones, and will be governed by the special exception requirements for a private educational institution. Staff therefore recommends approval of proposed text amendment TXT2003-00206 as submitted.

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Attachments: A. Proposed Text Amendment
B. Text Amendment Application
C. Applicant's Statement
D. Relevant Sections of the Zoning Ordinance